

Template for case studies (case studies should be no more than 2 pages)

Title: Services and social activities for incoming doctoral students provided by the PhD House at the International Center at Aarhus University

What was done:

Aarhus University (AU) wishes to strengthen its position as a leading and visible international university and therefore the university has developed an Internationalization Strategy for the years 2009-2013. The ambition is to seize the opportunities of developing knowledge and talents offered by globalization, and thereby contribute to shaping the international development of the knowledge-area.

The International Centre (IC) has been established to meet this challenge. The International Centre maintains international partnerships and combines a wide range of services for international students, PhD's and visiting scholars. As part of IC the PhD House has been established.

The facility offers a professional and social meeting place for PhD students from Denmark and abroad. The new PhD House includes conference facilities for PhD courses in transferable skills and a café where young Aarhus University researchers and international scholars can meet to exchange ideas and socialise.

The PhD House has an activity group that is a volunteer group that organizes activities in the PhD House, primarily aimed at doctoral students and post-docs. The group cooperates with the four PhD Associations about organizing academic and social events, such as music events, PhD Cafés and after work meetings.

The building also contains the IC Dormitory, which offers introductory housing for newly arrived PhD students from abroad. The 28 furnished single rooms, two double rooms and two two-room apartments can be reserved by international PhD-students as their first accommodation in Aarhus.

The PhD House contains:

- Dales Café
- Conference facilities for PhD courses
- IC Dormitory for international PhD students
- Office facility for AU PhD associations
- One stop service desk for doctoral students at the International Centre
- AU housing department at the International Centre dealing with housing matters for international PhD students
- Adjacent to Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies

Links to:

- International dimensions to examination, supervision and the doctoral experience

Motivation and aims:

With the PhD House, Aarhus University aspires to create a dynamic academic and social environment for the university's young research talents and make AU even more attractive to international researcher talent.

Lessons learnt:

The services to international doctoral students should be closely linked to the general services provided to international guests (students and academic staff). Doctoral students are generally given the same level of service as post docs.

For the activity group to function there need to be a dedicated staff member to support the group with logistics etc. It can't be based on volunteers only.

The dormitory is very popular and generally fully booked.

Scalability and transferability:

The initiatives should be both scalable and transferable. Some of the services provided, like the dormitory, however require rather large investments. Whereas the activity group is mainly based on volunteers.

Further information:

<http://phd.au.dk/phdhouse/>

Location of practice: AU Research and Talent, International Center

<http://www.au.dk/en/internationalcentre/>

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Work package titles and themes:

- International dimensions to examination, supervision and the doctoral experience
- Design and development of a doctoral supplement to cover broader activities, training and experiences with a particular focus on employability & mobility
- Employer engagement, including employers not traditionally associated with the recruitment of doctoral graduates
- Approaches to training and support for doctoral candidates and supervisors
- Dissemination and promotion

Note for authors:

These case studies will be made publically available via the project website and may be included in future project publications and reports (printed and online).

Project website: www.doctoralexcellence.dk

Template adapted from JISC and SHEEC case studies, JT 14/2/13